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SUBJECT Chinese Influence in Rural Thailand

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6. There are two prominent Chinese associations in Pitsanulok. The Swatow group is a highly respected, influential group in the town. They have a splendid building for the Association which serves as a sort of club house with facilities for billiard tables and theatre. They possess the only usable piano in the town, have a band, and sponsor basketball games. When the governor was approached and asked to suggest members to a committee to head up a proposed leprosarium, he immediately suggested several members of the Chinese association. There is also a second and less prominent Chinese association in the town composed of the Hainanens.
7. As the government considers natives of Thailand to be Thai, many Chinese merchants register their property in the name of their children, born in Thailand, to comply with nationality regulations.
8. Chinese is the commercial language of the country. Although there is a regulation that certain invoices, etc, be in Thai, usually the Chinese merchant uses Chinese unless requested otherwise. Sometimes printed invoice headings are in both Thai and Chinese.
9. The Chinese make every effort to hold to their language. There are two Chinese schools in Pitsanulok and although such schools are not to run beyond the fourth grade, the ruling is circumvented by having a 4B, 4C, and 4D grade which, in reality, is a fifth, sixth, and seventh grade. The exclusive attendance at a primary Chinese school is sometimes against the Chinese child when he tries to continue his schooling in a Thai school and finds he has but a limited ability to read and write in Thai. Both the Chinese schools in Pitsanulok are well attended. Then, of course, there is the teaching of Chinese in the home. I had one Chinese student in our school that always came late to class. When finally questioned, he revealed that he always had to study his Chinese at home an hour before coming to class and this frequently caused his tardiness.
10. Many of the adult Chinese have a very meager knowledge of Thai; sometimes it is limited to what might be termed market language, the ability to count, "yes" and "no", and little more.
11. The Thai Government felt at one time that they might overcome this Chinese tendency to hold on to their language by requiring the youngsters to get their primary education [the first four grades] in Thai, which is considerably easier to learn than Chinese. Thus, with the children having acquired one language, they would not have any inclination to learn Chinese. However, with the early training at home in Chinese and the Chinese schools operating, this idea has not worked out as planned and this is particularly true in towns outside of Bangkok.
12. Chinese newspapers are available throughout Siam as well as Chinese literature. Movies carry both Thai and Chinese dialogue flashed along the side of the screen for US made movies. There are also Chinese movies shown. There is always agitation for more Chinese language radio broadcasting and China stations can readily be tuned in.
13. The Chinese, as workers, are preferred to the Thai. They do better and more work and, consequently, demand a better wage. For example, a Thai carpenter in Pitsanulok receives about US\$1.00 per day while a Chinese carpenter can demand about US\$3.00 a day. [In Bangkok, a Chinese carpenter earns from US\$5.00 to \$6.00 a day. A Thai school teacher earns from US\$30.00 to \$50.00 a month]
14. The Thai people do not seem to want any more Chinese, Communist or non-Communists. They realize that the commercial interests of the country are in the hands of the Chinese and there is little they can do about it. However, there is no apparent discrimination against the Chinese already in Thailand.

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